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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by

Ambassador Tekeda Alemu

**Permanent Representative Federal Democratic
Republic Ethiopia**

On Agenda Item 28: Advancement of women:

At

**The 66th Session of the United Nations General
Assembly Third Committee**

**New York,
October 2011**

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on your election to lead the work of this Committee. Let me assure you Ethiopia's full and active cooperation with, and support for, the works of this Committee. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by Kenya on behalf of the Africa group and by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to express our profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for the reports before us.

I would like also to use this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, for the constructive dialogue we have had with the distinguished members of the Committee during the presentation of Ethiopia's sixth and seventh combined periodic report at the 49th session of the Committee and I wish to affirm Ethiopia's commitment to implement the recommendation of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action clearly points out the importance of improving the situation of rural women through equal access to productive resources, especially land,

capital and technology. It also emphasized the need for successful strategies to empower women living in rural areas. Despite some progress in the empowerment of women and gender equality since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women in rural areas in developing countries continue to live in dire situations. Poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity resulting, inter alia, from inadequate income, lack of education and gender inequality continue to be predominant phenomena in rural areas. In many developing countries, women are being left to carry the full burdens of agricultural production, but often with no legal protection or rights to property ownership. Persistent gender disparities in access to and control over resources, including technology, agricultural extension services and credit exclude women's participation from high-value market. Similarly, access to basic health services and prenatal care remains very limited in relation to women in rural areas.

It is our conviction that due to the critical role of women in poverty reduction, food security and sustainable development, no doubt, there is an urgent need to redouble our effort to improve the situation of rural women through expanding their access to local services, employment opportunities, land rights and technologies. In this regard, international cooperation in terms of financial support will be vital to the development of rural areas and agricultural sector.

Mr. Chairman,

It cannot be overemphasized that violence against women has been a deep-rooted problem in different parts of the world. This egregious phenomenon becomes even more complicated with respect to women migrant workers who are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and domestic violence by their employers. Women migrant workers with an irregular immigration status are particularly vulnerable to economic abuse and exploitation and they have limited access to justice. It is our strong view that the international community should step in to address the endless suffering and human rights violation of women migrant workers. There is also a need to intensify efforts both at national, regional and international level to formulate and implement laws, policies and strategies to eliminate violence against women migrant workers.

Mr. Chairman,

In Ethiopia, agriculture remains the main stay of the economy and more than 85 percent of the people, half of them women, depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Due to this reason, Ethiopia attaches great importance to the situation of women in rural areas and to the development challenges faced by them. In line with the land administration law of both the federal and regional states, initiatives have been taken to register the name of both spouses for land ownership certificates in order to guarantee the rights of women to own

and administer resources. Under the Food Security Programme, more attention has been given to women, particularly to female-headed household. Special encouragement is being given to women to engage in micro and small-scale enterprises. In terms of reducing the burden of house-hold work of women, the National Energy Development Programme has taken effective steps in introducing appropriate technology such as bio-gas, energy saving stove, etc. which help women to reduce the household burden.

Ethiopia is also engaged in a range of efforts to improve access to and raise the quality of family-planning services. The health policy and health sector development program emphasizes universal access to essential health services, focusing on the poor and the vulnerable in rural communities. Several measures, including awareness-creation efforts, have also been taken to reduce maternal mortality and improve access to health service through the health extension program. Though we have made some positive gains on this front, we have to go a long way to reach the motto of "No Mother Shall Die while giving life". Similarly, efforts have been made to increase the enrollment and retention rate of girls and women in all levels of education and training. As a result, the Gender Party index has showed significant progress both at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. Of course,

we are grateful to all those development partners who have contributed to whatever success we have made in this area.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chairperson**, I would like to reiterate Ethiopia's firm commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women. I wish to reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

I thank you.